

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00

NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 AID-05 IO-11

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O P 091008Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7640

INFO ALL OAU CAPITALS PRIORITY 0006

AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY

USLO PEKING PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 0284

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, OAU, AO

SUBJECT: OAU CM OPENS, ADOPTS NEUTRAL SUMMIT AGENDA AND ADJOURNS

SUMMARY: THE OAU EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL OF MINISTERS (CM) OPENED IN ADDIS JANUARY 8. ETHIOPIAN CHIEF OF STATE, BG TEFERI BANTE, GAVE A WELCOMING ADDRESS TO WHICH REPRESENTATIVES OF EGYPT, BURUNDI AND GHANA RESPONDED. THE SPEAKERS UNDERLINED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ANGOLAN PROBLEM TO ALL OF AFRICA AND THE VERY EXISTENCE OF THE OAU. THE EGYPTIAN CALLED FOR AN AFRICAN SOLUTION TO THIS AFRICAN PROBLEM AND SAID THAT ANGOLA SHOULD BE FOR ANGOLANS. THE GHANAIAAN, NOTING THE PRO-MPLA POSITION OF HIS GOVERNMENT, CALLED FOR CONCILIATION IN ANGOLA UNDER THE MPLA. LATER, IN CLOSED SESSION, THE MINISTERS DECIDED THAT THEIR FUNCTION WAS LIMITED TO PREPARING AN AGENDA FOR SUMMIT AND

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ADOPTED SINGLE AGENDA ITEM "CONSIDERATION OF THE ANGOLAN

PROBLEM." MINISTERS THEN ADJOURNED TO AWAIT SUMMIT SCHEDULED BEGIN AFTERNOON JANUARY 10. END SUMMARY.

1. THE OAU EXTRAORDINARY CM ON ANGOLA OPENED IN PUBLIC SESSION AT 1700 HOURS LOCAL JANUARY 8. ETHIOPIAN CHIEF OF STATE, BG TEFERI BANTE, GAVE A SHORT OPENING ADDRESS. THIS WAS FOLLOWED BY "RESPONSES" BY CHIEF DELEGATES FROM EGYPT, BURUNDI, AND GHANA.

2. BG TEFERI WELCOMED DELEGATES TO "ADDIS ABABA-- SEAT OF THE OAU" ON BEHALF OF EPMG. THE NEW ETHIOPIA, HE SAID, REITERATED ITS COMMITMENT TO THE PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CHARTER OF THE OAU AND IS CONSCIOUS OF THE OBLIGATIONS WHICH THE MEETINGS OF THE ORGANIZATION IMPOSE UPON IT. TEFERI THEN NOTED THE EXTRAORDINARY CHALLENGE WHICH THE PROBLEM OF ANGOLA POSES " TO THE FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF GENUINE INDEPENDENCE IN AFRICA AND TO THE ONWARD MARCH OF THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA". HE OPINED THAT THE OUTCOME OF THE MEETINGS WOULD DETERMINE WHICH WAY AFRICA WOULD GO -- "WHETHER AFRICANS WILL BE MASTERS OF THEIR OWN DESTINY." THE CHALLENGE OF ANGOLA "IS ALSO GRAVE" BECAUSE APARTHEID HAS TAKEN THE OFFENSIVE FOR THE FIRST TIME. SIGNIFICANTLY, TEFERI CONCLUDED WITH A NOTE OF CAUTION TO THE DELEGATES. HE URGED THEM TO AVOID FORCING THE ISSUES. PREMATURELY. "YOUR TASK IS TO WORK ON AN APPROPRIATE AGENDA FOR THE ASSEMBLY (SUMMIT) AND ALSO TO HOLD.... .. WIDE CONSULTATIONS. YOU ARE NOT EXPECTED... TO ENGAGE IN FORMAL DISCUSSIONS AND EVEN LESS TO ARRIVE AT DECISIONS ON YOUR OWN."

COMMENT: TEFERI'S CAUTIONARY STATEMENT CAME AS A SURPRISE TO MOST OBSERVERS, GIVEN EPMG'S TACIT SUPPORT OF MPLA. IT MAY HAVE BEEN AN ATTEMPT TO PROJECT A "NEUTRAL" IMAGE FOR ETHIOPIA AS SEAT OF OAU OR TO PREPARE A FALL-BACK POSITION IF EPMG EXPECTATIONS OF SUMMIT ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE MPLA ARE NOT BORNE OUT. END COMMENT.

3. THE EGYPTIAN REPRESENTATIVE, NOTING EGYPT'S "AFRICANESS", STATED THAT ANGOLA WAS AN AFRICAN PROBLEM TO BE CONFIDENTIAL

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SOLVED BY AFRICANS. "THE SEARCH TO SOLVE OUR OWN PROBLEMS OURSELVES DEMONSTRATES HOW CREATIVE WE ARE," HE SAID. HE CALLED FOR AN "ANGOLA FOR ANGOLANS" AND SAID THE NATION SHOULD FREE ITSELF OF FOREIGNERS WHO SAP IT OF AFRICANESS. THE REPRESENTATIVE REPEATEDLY REQUESTED THE REMOVAL OF "ALL FOREIGN ELEMENTS" FROM ANGOLA AND STATED THAT THE OAU SHOULD BE AGAINST ALL HUMAN AND MATERIAL INTERFERENCE IN ANGOLA. IN REJECTING ANY FOREIGN INTERFERENCE IN AN-

GOLA, THE EGYPTIAN SPECIFICALLY CONDEMNED THE "FLAGRANT INTERFERENCE OF SOUTH AFRICA." HE STATED THAT THE OAU MUST ASSURE THE UNITY OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENT AND PROMISED THAT EGYPT WOULD DO ALL IN ITS POWER TO SOLVE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE CONTENDING ANGOLAN GROUPS. "WE (AFRICANS) HAVE ALWAYS REJECTED FOREIGN SOLUTIONS," HE CONCLUDED.

4. AFTER A POLITE, BUT NON-SUBSTANTIVE "RESPONSE" BY THE BURUNDI REPRESENTATIVE, GHANAIA FOMIN FELLI MADE AN IMPASSIONED PLEA FOR AFRICAN UNITY. THE OAU, HE SAID, IS NOW FACED WITH THE GREATEST CHALLENGE TO ITS EXISTENCE, A CHALLENGE WHICH COULD BE THE "DEATH KNEEL OF THE OAU" IF OUTSIDE FORCES SUCCEED. THE ACTIVITY IN ANGOLA, FELLI SAID, WAS CONTRARY TO THE OAU CHARTER WHICH CALLS FOR THE "TOTAL ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM FROM THE CONTINENT." SOUTH AFRICA, HE STATED, ENTERED INTO ANGOLA TO STOP THE MPLA AND TO KEEP ITS HOLD ON NAMIBIA SECURE. OTHER ANGOLAN FACTIONS (UNNAMED) UNITED WITH SOUTH AFRICA AND THEREFORE CANNOT BE SUPPORTED. ADMITTING THAT HIS COUNTRY, GHANA, HAD ALREADY RECOGNIZED THE MPLA, FELLI SAID THAT ANGOLA AND ITS FACTIONS SHOULD BE RECONCILED. THIS OAU CONFERENCE, HE CONCLUDED, SHOULD DIRECT ITSELF TO PROMOTING THE PEACE AND UNITY OF ANGOLA. COMMENT: FELLI'S "RESPONSE" RECEIVED THE WARMEST RECEPTION OF ANY DURING THE OPENING SESSION. HE WAS INTERRUPTED SEVERAL TIMES BY APPLAUSE, USUALLY AFTER HE HAD MADE A STATEMENT FAVORABLE TO THE MPLA. END COMMENT.

5. THE CONFERENCE THEN WENT INTO CLOSED SESSION. ACCORDING TO A PRESS STATEMENT GIVEN BY OAU A/SEC GEN FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS PETER ONU LATER IN THE EVENING OF JANUARY 8, THE CM DECIDED TO RECOMMEND TO THE ASSEMBLY OF HEADS OF CONFIDENTIAL

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STATE AND GOVERNMENT A "SINGLE AGENDA ITEM" ENTITLED "CONSIDERATION OF THE ANGOLAN PROBLEM." HE CONCLUDED: "SO THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE THE SUMMIT AND THE WORK OF THE COUNCIL IS OVER UNTIL TOMORROW (SIC), WHEN THE SUMMIT MEETS." (THE SUMMIT WILL BEGIN JANUARY 10.)

6. COMMENT: IN POST-SESSION DISCUSSIONS WITH CM DELEGATES, EMBOFF WAS TOLD THAT "SOLUTION" OF PARA 5 WAS THE ONLY OPTION OPEN TO THE MINISTERS. THEY WERE NOT EMPOWERED TO DECIDE ANY SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES AND, GIVEN THE COMPLEXITY AND VOLATILITY OF THE PROBLEM AND THE NATIONAL INTERESTS INVOLVED, TO TAKE ANY FURTHER DECISIONS WOULD BE TO PREJUDGE THE OUTCOME OF THE SUMMIT. THE MINISTERS AND OTHER DELEGATES ARE NOW FREE TO DISCUSS AND LOBBY INFORMALLY WITH EACH OTHER WITHOUT YET

HAVING TO STAND UP AND BE COUNTED ON THIS CRITICAL
AFRICAN ISSUE.

SPECULATION, AND LOBBYING, NOW CENTERS ON TWO UNKNOWNNS:

(A) HOW MANY COUNTRIES WILL HAVE RECOGNIZED THE MPLA
WHEN SUMMIT OPENS (WITH REPORTED COMOROS MOVE, TOTAL
SEEMS TO BE 22; MAJORITY IS 24), AND (B) WHICH CHIEFS

OF STATE WILL APPEAR (HEAD COUNT STILL UNKNOWN, AS IS
PROPORTION BETWEEN PRO-AND ANTI-MPLA LEADERS).

REPORTED ARRIVAL OF DIALLO TELLI ON GUINEA DELEGATION
IS DISHEARTENING TO MODERATES, WHO FEAR HIS PARLIAMEN-
TARY TALENTS AND HIS CLOUT AS PREVIOUS OAU SEC GEN.

CUBANS AND OTHER UNINVITED "OBSERVERS" WERE NOT RPT NOT
PERMITTED ATTEND WORKING SESSION.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETING AGENDA, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, MINISTERIAL MEETINGS, SUMMIT MEETINGS, REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976ADDIS00284
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760008-0348
From: ADDIS ABABA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760173/aaaacmyr.tel
Line Count: 183
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <25 MAR 2004 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <29 JUL 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: OAU CM OPENS, ADOPTS NEUTRAL SUMMIT AGENDA AND ADJOURNS SUMMARY: THE OAU EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL OF MINISTERS (CM)
TAGS: PFOR, AO, OAU, MPLA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006